
*Michigan PTA mobilizes the forces of school, home, and community in order
to ensure a quality education and nurturing environment for every child.*

**Michigan PTA Statement on
Kindergarten Start Date Bills**

The Michigan Legislature has introduced legislation that would change the eligibility age for starting kindergarten. Currently a child in Michigan must be 5 years old by December 1st in order to begin kindergarten in the fall of that year.

Senate Bill 315 would move the eligibility date from December 1st to November 1st beginning in the 2012-2013 school year, requiring a child to be 5 by November 1st to start kindergarten. Subsequently, in the 2013-2014 school year, a child would have to be 5 by October 1st; and, in the 2014-2015 school year, a child would have to be 5 by September 1st. Senate Bill 316 addresses the appropriations side of the bill, adjusting the state funding to school districts to align with the new start date.

House Bill 4513 would move the eligibility date from December 1st to September 1st, requiring a child to be 5 years old by September 1st in order to start kindergarten that school year. This bill permits the parent or guardian of a child who will turn 5 between September 2nd and December 1st to request a waiver to allow the child to enroll in school prior to his or her birthday.

While Michigan PTA supports ensuring that every child is ready to learn when starting kindergarten, there are consequences to this legislation that we would like addressed. There will be a reduction in revenue to school districts for one to three years, depending on the final legislation, and school districts would face challenges aligning staff to the smaller class sizes. What has not been discussed is how will the state use the savings that will result in fewer kindergartners?

Michigan PTA advocates for inclusion of the following provisions to the proposed legislation:

- Phase-in over three years, as proposed in Senate Bill 315. However, we would like to see the phase-in process begin in the 2013-2014 school year.
- Waiver request opportunity, with individual school districts determining the requirements for a waiver.
- Apply the savings from implementation of this legislation to readiness programs for children impacted by the change in kindergarten start date.

Michigan PTA expects the legislature to consider the impact to our students when making changes to our public schools. Michigan PTA supports improved educational outcomes for our students. Having children prepared to learn when they start kindergarten enables students to meet rigorous educational standards.

Michigan PTA appreciates the thoughtful consideration of including these important provisions to the proposed legislation to ensure the best possible outcomes for the children of Michigan.